

It is outside our purpose to follow further the political and military history of this new State. The struggle lasted, more or less intermittently, till the Peace of Westphalia at last wrung from Spain the unreserved recognition of the Dutch Republic. During that long period the republic became a power of the first rank. Holland was for a time, indeed, the greatest maritime nation of Europe, and proved its supremacy on the sea by wresting from its enemy a part of its colonial empire. In the struggle with Parma on land it failed to maintain its sway over all the provinces represented by the States-General which deposed the Spanish tyrant at the Hague. The sovereignty of the incapable and treacherous Alencxm-Anjou proved a fiasco, whose inglorious history may be left in oblivion. Flanders and Brabant were won back to their allegiance by the indomitable Parma, and, with the Walloon provinces, continued till the Peace of Utrecht to form what were called the Spanish Netherlands. In the end only seven of the seventeen provinces—Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, Overysse, Groningen, Friesland, Guelderland—flew the independent flag of the new commonwealth. The assassination of William, the skill of Parma, the incapacity of Leicester, whom Elizabeth at last sent to the rescue, frustrated the larger, if still partial union which had forsworn Philip. The genius of Maurice, William's great son, and of Oldenbarnevelt at last succeeded in saving and consolidating what remained. But the smaller the eventual State, the greater the glory of its achievements. The republic was, in fact, from some points of view the greatest thing produced by the Reformation age. The greatness of Burgundy in its greatest days was inherited and surpassed by the republic, whilst the Spanish provinces sank into the lethargy of stagnation. And not the least part of its title to greatness lies in the fact that this little republic, which at times dictated its will to the greatest potentates of Europe, and maintained for fully a century its rank as a great power, became a refuge for the fugitives from those lands where religious and political liberty had still to vindicate its rights. In spite of outbursts of Calvinist intolerance, the Dutch Republic was the asylum to which the persecuted of every land fled for protection. To it the Pilgrim Fathers, whom Elizabeth banished the realm,